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ABSTRACT

To determine what child care arrangements are made by employed mothers, how much they spend for child care, and their potential use of other arrangements including day care, a study was conducted in the Pittsburgh area early in 1973. Included were four work settings which employ women in a variety of occupations. A structured questionnaire was mailed to 819 women workers: (1) white collar workers at two universities, (2) unskilled and professional workers in a hospital, and (3) semi-skilled workers in a food processing plant. The distribution of the responses to the questionnaire, an analysis of the factors affecting the mode of child care and the level of child care expenditures are included in this general description of the study and its findings. In general, the respondents were satisfied with their current arrangements, but expressed support for government or industry-related child care arrangements which would be easily assessible and inexpensive. (CS)

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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLICY ASPECTS OF CHILD CARE:

A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS OF WORKING MOTHERS

AUG. 30 1974

Report of a Study

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March 1974

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Office of Child Development

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This report consists of (a) a very general description of the study and its findings; (b) the distribution of the responses to the questionnaire and (c) an analysis of the factors affecting the mode of child care and the level of child care expenditures. The period of the grant was May 1972 through December 1973, the data was collected in early March 1973. Beatrice Lampiris, the administrative assistant for the project played a major role in organizing and supervising the actual survey.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY'S FINDINGS

The study's purpose was to ascertain what child care arrangements are made by employed mothers, how much they spend for child care and their potential use of other arrangements including day care.

The study was conducted in the Pittsburgh area early in 1973 through the cooperation of four work settings which employ women in a variety of occupations. The women were mainly white collar workers at two universities, both unskilled and professional workers in a hospital and semi-skilled workers in a food processing plant. In each case the personnel office provided us with lists of names and addresses of female employees. In some institutions, no information was available on marital status and number of children. For the two small employers, we included all women workers. In the two largest institutions, we randomly selected one-third of the women workers for the target population. We then arbitrarily restricted the target population to women aged between 20 and 40 as those most likely to have preschool children. In addition, women without children were eliminated from the sample in advance, if we had that information.

The structured questionnaire was mailed to 819 women workers. With two additional mailings of the questionnaire and one telephone follow-up the response rate from the original 819 was 55 percent. Based on the phone

follow-up, it is clear that most nonrespondents had no preschool children. Our best estimate of the response rate for mothers of preschoolers is 85 percent, a rate substantially higher than most mail surveys. Nonresponding mothers of preschoolers do not differ significantly from respondents in socio-economic characteristics.

The four work institutions range in size from 2,000 to 10,000 employees. Our best estimates are that women with children under six comprise about ten percent of their female work force.

The actual sample consists of 191 employed mothers who have at least one child under six years. In fact, 53 percent have only one child. These are young women with an average age of 29. Three-quarters of the women have husbands. The sample is predominantly middle class whether one considers the woman's occupation or her husband's. Forty-three percent of the women are professionals, officials or managers, another 35 percent are clerical workers, 11 percent are technicians while the remaining 13 percent are semi-skilled or unskilled. They work an average of 34 hours per week, but a sizeable 21 percent work 20 hours or less weekly. Total family income confirms the generally high status of this sample: the mean annual income is $8,000, but the range stretches from less than $3,000 to over $35,000 annually. In race, 30 percent are nonwhite but in religion, the sample includes predominantly a mixture of Protestants, Catholics and others with no affiliation.

Primary Source of Child Care and Expenditures

These women rely on a variety of arrangements for their children during work hours: the average number of arrangements is 1.8. Nearly two-thirds take the child out of the home for care at least for part of the

time. More than two-thirds count on nonrelatives for child care. The most commonly used arrangements involve a babysitter at home, a babysitter out of the home, and a relative out of the home. Nineteen percent use some form of day care either in a center, family home or all day nursery.

In general, the respondents are satisfied with their current arrangements: half consider them "very good" and another 31 percent consider them "good". Dependability of the arrangements is generally high: 64 percent say they are "always dependable", but over half the women need to make different arrangements if the child is sick.

Most people (80 percent) pay for child care and among those who pay the average cost is $24 weekly. The weekly cost for families with one child is $19, and the per child cost goes down for each additional child. For most women who take the child out of the home, some travel time is involved: three-quarters spend 10 minutes or more transporting the child.

These expenditures slightly overestimate the cost for child care. Under the Federal Revenue Act of 1971, families can deduct up to $400 a month for child care costs incurred while the mother works from adjusted gross income in determining their federal income taxes. The actual benefit of the law depends upon the actual child care expenditures, the family's marginal tax rate and whether the family itemizes deductions. (The full $500 deduction is available to families with less than $18,000 annual income).

Three-quarters of our respondents heard about the new law. For those 107 families which itemize deductions, about 77 are within the income range to benefit from the child care deductions. Thus about 40 percent of this sample might be able to lower their federal taxes. For example, a family with annual income of between $10,000 and 12,000 which spends $783 a year for child care could save $173 in taxes.

Attitudes Toward Day Care

We asked our respondents several questions about using day care.

> There has been a growing interest in day care centers for young children. If a day care center were available at reasonable cost and in a convenient location, would you send your child or children to it?

Answers to that question are generally favorable: 60 percent say yes they would use such a center, 29 percent are unsure and 11 percent say no. Most women (70 percent) think that a day care can care well for children 3 years or younger; only three percent think a center might never be suitable.

Despite these favorable views on day care, the maximum amount people would be willing to pay weekly per child is not very high. These families would pay $22 per child -- about the same amount they now spend.

Work and Child Care

The respondents were asked open-ended questions about the tasks of working and arranging for suitable child care.

> Sometimes working women cannot accept a promotion in their present job or look for a higher paying job because their working hours would require different or more expensive child care arrangements. Has this ever happened to you? If yes, please explain.

Among the 43 women who responded to this question, some specified what advancement they had to pass up and others indicated that children and child care make it difficult even to consider for advancement:

> I refused promotion due to the high overtime hours required which would mean a paid babysitter more frequently.

> I am holding down my job on a part-time basis, however the woman before me was fulltime. I would have taken it full time if it had not been for the children. I feel that 37 hours a week is too long to leave them with a babysitter <u>unless necessary</u>, no matter how qualified she is.

In answer to the broader question: "Do you have any comments about the problems and costs of child care?" two-thirds of the respondents described their own situations. They indicated the special problems in using relatives and in taking children out of the home. The one point most often expressed was that child care uses up a significant amount of the woman's salary, so that it hardly pays to work:

> My prime reason for working is to supplement my husband's income and I see no reason to make $50 per week and pay $45 for the care of my child. The extra $5 isn't worth the aggravation of us both getting up everyday.
>
> Fortunately I work because I like to. By the time I have paid the sitter and the cleaning woman and everyone else .... I actually make very little money.

There was considerable concern over the difficulty of finding good child care:

> There seem to be almost no facilities for children under three. A woman who is a professional will entirely lose her position if she takes three years away from work. Private babysitters are quite expensive and untrained. I've been lucky in finding an excellent one, but there must be a better solution.

And many mothers spontaneously (and with some resentment) raised the point that only the very poor are eligible for subsidized care:

> I think it is really tragic that day care arrangements, particularly for the middle class or above-poverty mother are so haphazard. There are really no alternatives to choose from, no trained caretakers. Good care happens mostly by chance . . . .
>
> As it is now, any working mother who makes a decent salary is supposed to foot the bill for those who don't . . .

Most respondents felt the survey was a good idea and hoped that it reflects governmental or employers interest in making child care arrangements more available and less expensive for working mothers.

Distributions of Responses

for N=191

Economic, Social and Policy Aspects

of Childcare

March 1974

School of Urban and Public Affairs

Carnegie-Mellon University

I.

Family Type	% of Total
Mother Headed	17.3
Nuclear Family	65.4
Mother Extended	6.3
Extended	7.9
Other	3.1
Total	100.0

II.

Number of children per family	% of Total
1	52.9
2	27.2
3	13.6
4	2.6
5	2.6
6	1.0
Total	100.0

Average # of children per family = 2.31

III.

Number of Preschoolers	% of Total
1	78.5
2	19.4
3	2.1
Total	100.0

Average # of preschoolers per family = 1.24

IV. Who in your family is mainly responsible for taking care of your children?

Primary Care Giver	% of Total
Mother	54.5
Father	2.1
Both	34.6
Someone Else	7.3
No Answer	1.6
Total	100.0

V. Primary Source of Child Care

	% of Total
Husband	7.3
Relative in Home	6.8
Sitter in Home	16.8
Live in Help	1.0
Friend in Home	0.5
Older Child	1.6
Relative out of home	16.2
Sitter out of home	16.2
Daycare Center	11.0
Daycare Home	3.1
Friend Out of Home	3.1
Other	13.6
No Answer	2.6
Total	100.0

Average number of arrangements = 1.81

VI. Extra Time for Child Care Transport

	% of Total (N=105)
No Extra Time	26.7
Ten Minutes	29.5
Ten to Thirty Minutes	35.2
Half Hour Plus	8.6
Total	100.0

VII. Quality of Present Child Care Arrangements

	% of Total
Very Good	49.2
Good	31.4
Fair	11.5
Poor	3.7
No Answer	4.2
Total	100.0

VIII. Dependability of Present Child Care Arrangements

	% of Total
Always Dependable	63.9
Usually Dependable	29.8
Sometimes Not Dependable	4.2
Usually Not Dependable	0.5
Did not Answer	1.6
Total	100.0

IX. Child Care Expenditures

Average Cost Per Week	% of Total
$ 0 - 10.00	35.1
10.01 - 20.00	20.9
20.01 - 30.00	23.6
30.01 - 40.00	5.7
40.01 - 50.00	5.8
50.01 - 60.00	3.7
60.01 - 70.00	2.1
70.01 + up	3.1
Total	100.0

Mean = $21.63
StandardDeviation = $19.88

X. If a child is sick, do you usually change your regular child care arrangements?

	% of Total
Yes	56.5
No	41.9
Did Not Answer	1.6
Total	100.0

XI. Would use day care center if available

Reply	% of Total
Don't Know	29.3
No	10.5
Yes	59.7
Did Not Answer	0.5
Total	100.0

XII. What is the maximum amount of money you would be willing to pay weekly per child in such a day care center?

Price Per Week	% of Total
$ 0.00 - 10.00	20.2
10.01 - 20.00	35.9
20.01 - 30.00	30.7
30.01 - 40.00	6.2
40.01 - 40.00	6.1
50.01 + Up	.9
Total.	100.0

Mean = $22.09
Standard Deviation = $11.46

XIII. What is youngest age at which you think most children can be well cared for in a day care center?

Youngest Age	% of Total
1-6 months	8.9
7-12 months	9.4
13-18 months	13.1
19-24 months	17.8
25-36 months	20.9
After 3 years	26.7
Never	1.0
At a later age	1.0
No Answer	1.0
Total	100.0

XV.

Race	% of Total
White	68.6
Black	27.7
Oriental	3.1
Did Not Answer	0.5
Total	100.0

XVI.

Religion	% of Total
Protestant	39.8
Catholic	23.6
Jewish	6.3
None	15.2
Other	14.1
Did Not Answer	1.0
Total	100.0

XVII.

Age	% of Total
20-25	27.4
26-30	37.9
31-35	20.5
36-40	11.6
40 + up	2.6
Total	100.0

XVIII. How many hours a week do you usually work?

Hours per Week	% of Total (N=189)
0-15	10.6
16-20	10.0
21-25	3.7
26-30	3.7
31-35	3.7
36-40	59.8
41-45	3.7
46 + up	4.8
Total	100.0

XIX. Woman's Estimated Weekly Salary

Dollars Per Week	% of Total (N=182)
$ 0-50	4.9
51-100	26.4
101-150	41.2
151-200	14.9
201-300	9.3
301-400	2.2
401 + up	1.1
Total	100.0

Mean = $136.00
Mode = $184.61
Range: $127.20 - $507.69

XX. What would you say is the most important reason you work?

	% of Total
To supplement Income	31.9
Primary Income Earner	24.1
To maintain prof-skills	9.4
Enjoy working	10.5
To maintain career	5.8
To get out of house	2.6
To put husband through school	2.1
Combination	12.6
N.A.	1.0
Total	100.0

XXIII.

Total Family Income	Adjusted % of Total
Less than $3,000	0.5
$3,000-3,999	2.2
$4,000-4,999	4.4
$5,000-5,999	7.1
$6,000-6,999	3.3
$7,000-7,999	3.3
$8,000-8,999	4.4
$9,000-9,999	6.6
$10,000-11,999	10.4
$12,000-13,999	13.7
$14,000-15,999	8.2
$16,000-17,999	8.2
$18,000-19,999	7.1
$20,000-24,999	4.4
$25,000-29,999	6.6
$30,000-35,000	4.9
Greater than $35,000	4.9
Total	100.0